Call to Order

Approval of Minutes of November 4, 2010

Report of the Executive Committee (Brian Christman, Chair of the Faculty Senate)

Presentation by Brett Sweet
    Vice Chancellor for Finance and CFO

Q&A with Vice Chancellor Jeff Balser

New business
    Confirmation of new Senate Parliamentarian

Good of the Senate

Adjournment


Voting Members absent: Benbow, Bradford, Collins (regrets), Conway-Welch, Fischer, Floyd-Thomas (regrets), Fogo (regrets), Gervais, Guthrie, Hudnut-Beumler (regrets), LeBlanc (regrets), Miller, Nanney, Oppenheimer, Peek (regrets), Schwartz (regrets), Smith (regrets), Smrekar, Wait (regrets), Yarbrough (regrets), and Yoder (regrets).

Ex Officio Members present: Bandas, Damon, Fife, McNamara, Miller, Paschal, Raiford, Roberts, Stalcup, Sweet, and Wente.

Ex Officio Members absent: Bernard, Fortune, McCarty (regrets), Wcislo (regrets), Williams, Wright, and Zeppos (regrets).
The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. by Chair Brian Christman.

Next Item on the Agenda – Approval of Minutes of November 4, 2010

Chair Christman asked for the minutes of 11/4/10 to be approved. He asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes. There were none. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Next Item on the Agenda – Report of Executive Committee

Chair Christman mention some of the issues that the Senate executive committee continues to discuss and work on: 1) e-Discovery document/email privacy issue, 2) working to select a new Process Chair for the grievance process, and 3) working on the Honor Council structure issue through Student Life Committee. He then introduced Vice Chancellor and CFO, Brett Sweet.

Next Item on the Agenda – Presentation by Brett Sweet--Vice Chancellor for Finance and CFO

Vice Chancellor Sweet talked about the revenue sources across the university. He also showed the FY2011 Expense and Funding budget details. He said that most of the money is spent on people and things (faculty/staff salaries and supplies). He showed the results of the first quarter of FY2011. He showed the endowment returns over the last forty years. He said that next year will be challenging for endowment-dependent areas (FY12). He said that in FY13, we should come “out of the turn.”

Vice Chancellor Sweet showed the differences between endowment dependency among schools and colleges. He also showed that Vanderbilt depends less on their endowment than many universities. We have been extremely successful in winning ARRA awards (stimulus awards). But, he said that ARRA funds will begin to taper next year. The bulk of future funding is tied to transportation and energy projects, so it will be challenging for Vanderbilt. He said that NIH budget will be shrinking in real terms, and Vanderbilt gets much of its grant funding from NIH. He said that it’s not the brightest picture in terms of winning NIH awards.

He then gave an overview of the federal budget picture. He pointed out that the healthcare picture has to change at the federal level. He ended by saying that we will continue to focus on raising endowment funds, to measure risks, and to make appropriate trade-offs.

He then opened the floor for questions.

Chair Christman: What about real wages and how that affects the recession?
Vice Chancellor Sweet: Most economists just don’t know right now. It is a grand experiment.
Chair-elect Weintraub: Will we see changes in our students’ abilities to afford Vanderbilt?
Vice Chancellor Sweet: The student No Loan program has helped us to keep the enrollment level steady.
Dean Carolyn Dever: We have seen some issues with international students, but not domestic students.

Vice Chair Bobby Bodenheimer: Compare us to peer institutions.
Vice Chancellor Sweet: Good news: we weren’t as endowment dependent, so we didn’t need to have draconian budget cuts. And we hadn’t leveraged ourselves like others. We have also kept our cash flow working better than many of our peers. We are in a much better position to recruit faculty than many of our peers because of this.

Past Chair Cynthia Paschal: Have we seen a difference on the medical side in terms of patients’ ability to pay?
Vice Chancellor Sweet: We haven’t seen the uncompensated care rate rise like we thought we would. Insurers are playing games harder than they used to, though.

Chair Christman thanked Vice Chancellor Sweet for his presentation.

Next Item on the Agenda – Q&A with Vice Chancellor Jeff Balser

Chair Christman introduced Vice Chancellor Balser, and said that he has agreed to answer questions from the Senate.

Chair Christman: What’s your vision of the future of the relationship between the Medical Center and University Central?
Vice Chancellor Balser: One of our advantages is the ability for us to integrate the medical center with university central. The things that improve quality of care also drop the costs of healthcare. Looking at the whole university, we have started to implement these ideas. We have shared administration and that lets us consolidate and integrate our infrastructure costs (development, PR, etc.). The cost savings is not immediate, but you’re able to bend the growth curve of costs by functioning as one university.

Building the Life Sciences/Engineering building is a top priority. We need for the economy to remain stable so that we can do that. I feel optimistic about how we will be positioned in the future relative to our peer institutions.

Chair-elect Weintraub: How do we do in competing for nurses in a city where there are many hospitals?
Vice Chancellor Balser: We compete favorably. We do many staff surveys, and we know that we perform very well compared to other hospitals.
Chair-elect Weintraub: I would imagine that is a good way to keep costs down is to keep your employees happy.
Vice Chancellor Balser: Our turnover rate is about 12.5%. Three or four years ago, it was 15%. How do you interpret that? Is it the economy or job satisfaction? We don’t know exactly, but we do know that it is critical to train and retain our staff members. We track the 18 month retention rate. We have seen our numbers improve via Innovate programs (such as nurses’ residency program). I would love to see us get down to 10% turnover rate.

Senator Bridget Rogers: Impact of the 100 Oaks facility on the area seems to be huge. Have the clinics met your expectations?
Vice Chancellor Balser: They have exceeded our expectations. It was a grand experiment, and it succeeded. We have found out that we can manage a Vanderbilt Medical Center outpost and it can be successful. From the faculty perspective, we have groups on a waiting list to go out there. From the patient perspective, they have surveys showing that the patient satisfaction is very high for 100 Oaks. Preventative health care is where we want to go—these things have a huge impact on cost as well.

Senator Judy Aschner: How will changes to resident duty hour limits affect the Medical Center?
Vice Chancellor Balser: This is an important issue to discuss here. The prime directive of resident programs is education not patient care—it is important for the Faculty Senate to know this. We have to maintain the quality of the program. We will not increase faculty numbers to cover this. That wouldn’t meet our mission. I think this issue forces us to be more creative about how we use physician extenders. We will use all healthcare providers to the limit of their licenses.

Chair Christman thanked Vice Chancellor Balser for his time.

Next Item on the Agenda – New business—Confirmation of new Senate Parliamentarian

Chair Christman then thanked Bill Damon for his service as parliamentarian in the fall semester 2010. Chair Christman asked for a voice vote to endorse Senator Kass Kovalcheck as the Senate parliamentarian for the spring semester. He was approved unanimously.

Next Item on the Agenda – Good of the Senate and Adjournment

Chair Christman asked for any new business or anything under “good of the senate.” Hearing none, he asked for a motion to adjourn, which was seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 5:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert E. Bodenheimer,
Vice Chair